

## HOW TO TALK ABOUT SEX

<https://fiercemarriage.com/how-to-talk-about-sex>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** All right. So here's the main thesis for this episode, that every healthy married couple should not only prioritize sex, but they should also prioritize communicating on the topic of sex. Does that make sense?

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** That's the whole premise of this episode. This theme for this month, as we talked about last week, if you missed that episode, go back, check it out. We did a kind of a primer on communication in general, what it is, the function that serves, and how we are to approach it as Christians. This is part of our communication series this month. Today, we thought, let's merge these topics of sex and communication because, Selena, you pointed out in one of our conversations, sex itself is a form of communication.

**Selena:** I'm sorry. I've just got "let's talk about sex" just *[chuckles]* running through my head.

**Ryan:** I try to avoid that kind of stuff.

**Selena:** How could you not? *[both chuckles]* Total like 80s, 90s kid. I know.

**Ryan:** Because we are the professional marriage folk and we're supposed to succumb to those.

**Selena:** We're not to be street use. *[both laughs]*

**Ryan:** Whatever. So we're talking about sex and how sex in itself is communication. But namely, we want to bring to you six kind of habits, or we used that word last week, six conversational approaches around your sex life as a couple. Of course, we will undergird that with a biblical view of sex. It's going to be our talk. See you on the other side.

[00:01:30] <Intro>

**Selena:** Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

**Ryan:** Here, we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

**Selena:** Sex—

**Ryan:** Communication—

**Selena:** Finances—

**Ryan:** Priorities—

**Selena:** Purpose—

**Ryan:** And everything in between.

**Selena:** Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

**[00:02:04]** <podcast begins>

**Selena:** I think it's easy to assume that we can just be good at sex and be good at talking about sex, right? And if we're not, then, well, I guess we'll just get better somehow. I think we can just sort of end there in our mind. I believe that there's a higher way, there's a better way that we as Christians, a married couple can talk about sex because the motivation is different. The heart orientation is different.

**Ryan:** I want to ask you, though, honestly. I'm not just trying to be devil's advocate here. Do you think it's easy to assume that we don't need to talk about it? I mean, I'm picturing couples... because I've never thought, "We're just awesome at it. We need to talk and figure it out." I don't know. Maybe it's not something that maybe crosses couples... their radar because there's this implicit belief that...

**Selena:** That's what I'm saying.

**Ryan:** ...you should just follow your passions and your passions will drive your sexual experience.

**Selena:** I think that's an assumption. Yeah, I think that's an easy assumption. That's what I was trying to say. I wish you would understand and read my mind all the time. *[Ryan chuckles]*

**Ryan:** That's why we're talking about this. *[Selena chuckles]* And I could see couples and they feel like this taboo in a sense. I'm picturing the couple who got engaged, got married, they had a great, you know, first couple of years,

although it might have been rocky in some spots because the first years of marriage tend to be a little bit of a learning curve. And then they kind of hit cruising altitude a little bit and they feel like their sexual experience kind of could use a little bit of growth, could use a little bit of...

**Selena:** Inspiration.

**Ryan:** Inspiration. There you go. Inspiration. But they don't know how to talk about it because they feel like, "Well, it's just supposed to be the spontaneous kind of movie-like experience where..."

**Selena:** It's all our expectations about everything. About our expectations on talking about it, our expectations of how it should be, and our expectations of how our spouse should respond to how we're talking about it. *[chuckles]* We have all these notions and thoughts. Where do you...

**Ryan:** We should have to talk about it is the thought. Why isn't it passionate? Does it mean that we don't love each other as much or that our love is fading?

**Selena:** Just why we should be talking about it.

**Ryan:** So we're here to tell you you need to prioritize this conversation. It's not going to happen on its own, by itself.

**Selena:** No.

**Ryan:** And a healthy sex life is not something that we naturally as humans are inclined to cultivate. Our inclination in this area is to be extremely self-centered and to be self-focused. We can forget God's design, His stamp of approval on this thing, and kind of the boundaries within which He has given us to flourish, not just survive, not just get it done, get the act done, get on to our life, but to thrive in this area, to flourish in your sexual experience. We have the whole book, the Song of Solomon, to thank that God has... He's unequivocally proven to us that that He's not approved in the area of sex. So we should not be [00:05:00] either. Does that sound all right?

**Selena:** It sounds good. No, I was just thinking when you said "our default is to be self-centered," and I'm thinking, yes, we are self-centered, but how am I as a wife? How can I tend to be self-centered? Sometimes my tendency doesn't look like, "Hey, give it to me the way I want it." It's more like, "Can we just hurry this up?" *[chuckles]* You know what I mean?

**Ryan:** Yeah.

**Selena:** I don't know. I just think it's good to...

[crosstalk]

**Ryan:** Or I just don't want you to be upset. So what is it going to take just to keep peace?

**Selena:** Right. Or just like, "Let's just exist and get this done because there's a lot of other things to do." You don't want to have that attitude of just adding to the list. But it kind of sometimes falls that way. But at the same time, can we talk about how even if it falls that way, we can still connect and glorify God in that. So it's just some questions, just some thoughts swirling around.

**Ryan:** Yeah. And I think on a husband side, the selfishness, the way it looks if we don't have these open lines of communication around this, what will happen is and what we've seen happens so often is a husband starts to feel maybe like their sexual experience is nothing like what he was hoping for, dreaming for, for whatever reason. Whether that's just twisted desires or even just desires that are... they might be good and right and not perverted in a way, and I don't mean that in a pejorative sense, but like not twisted.

What could happen is if a husband feels like he can't broach this topic with his wife or he feels like it's just not a conversation that... doesn't occur to him that this conversation needs to happen, it's easier to fall into temptation. It's easier to see the validity in the objects of our temptation. Usually, it's pornography or just sexual thought or maybe lingering on the internet a little bit too long. That's the seed of some sort of an affair, whether it's an emotional affair, a non-physical sexual affair. And what I mean by that is a lustful relationship with maybe images or videos on the internet. Jesus called that adultery is having those lustful thoughts. There's a lot to be gained in this area of having healthy communication around sex and seeing sex for the communication that it is.

**Selena:** Love it. All right.

**Ryan:** That was a long intro.

**Selena:** Long intro. Did you forget we were...?

**Ryan:** No. I just got taken away.

**Selena:** Swept away.

**Ryan:** Swept away with conversation. *[both chuckles]*

All right. If you guys want to help us out, we would really appreciate a rating or a review or both. Go to the podcast app of your choosing and just spend... You know, it probably takes like 30 seconds, 45 seconds to hit one of the star things, preferably the star rating thing all over to the right happens to be the fifth one of the stars.

**Selena:** Very gratifying.

**Ryan:** The other ones don't. Don't even try those ones. And write a little review. Well, how has this podcast helped you? If it has helped you, let us know, let someone else know. That grows the podcast and it grows the rapport that we could have with people that might join in.

If you want to be on mission with us, you can join [patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com). That's a community of people who get early access to the episodes as we're able to complete them early enough [*both chuckles*] to provide early access, which is about 75% of the time. And also they get all kinds of free stuff. But more than anything, you get to be part of this mission and this movement that is Fierce families, Fierce Marriage. We would love to have you on board there.

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So today, like we mentioned, we're talking about sex. In other words, what is your conversational life as a couple? How have you approached this topic is the question. Think to yourself.

**Selena:** How do we talk about sex?

**Ryan:** Let's talk about us for a second because I feel like this is an area that we've grown in and still can grow in.

**Selena:** Of course.

**Ryan:** I mean, that's just like, of course, you can always keep growing. But I don't know. What about our talking about sex strikes you as particularly helpful?

**Selena:** I think once we figured out that we spoke our expectations to each other, like we, you know, whatever they were, I think early on in our marriage, again, you have expectations of "it's going to be spontaneous. It's always going to be

passionate, and it's just going to be a glorious, rapturous moment." [Ryan chuckles] I mean, sometimes it is and a lot of times it can be. [00:10:00]

But once we started figuring out, okay, this can't happen like this all the time—maybe for some people it does—but we need to be a bit pragmatic about it just because we need to have a schedule. Because if we don't talk about when the ideal is time is for the husband or the wife, or both, we're never going to do it, or it's just going to be sprung upon us. You know, it's just kind of that weird in-between of, "So you want to..." [both chuckles]

I think that was one big step for us was saying, "Okay, hey, every two to three days is about where we fall." And I think we could go one to two, or, you know, two days is... And we've grown in how we can communicate that to each other. So it's not like, "Hey, I need this now." Or you're just taking cold showers seven days a week or something. We had a grow in that because there was a lot of I think missed expectations.

**Ryan:** Right. So just really laying that foundational conversation of "what is the right rhythm for us in terms of like daily or weekly? And how do we talk about it when those rhythms are at play?"

**Selena:** And when you are talking about it, making sure to voice I guess the fact that I'm not saying this is what you need to do. I'm presenting my desires and the things that matter to me, and then you're going to present yours. And then how can we walk through this together?

**Ryan:** And then talking around all the other things—the peripheral aspects of our sex life. You ask me all the time, like, "How is your thought life? How's your purity in terms of what you're looking at? And I just promise to never lie to you in that. That has created an immense amount of sanctification and holiness in our own marriage and my life as a man.

**Selena:** Built a lot of trust.

**Ryan:** Yeah. And so being willing to talk about these things. You guys, I can't overemphasize this. But it is a game-changer to be willing to talk about this, and then to have the tools in your hands to talk about. But even more than that—and this is where we're going to spend some more time—is understanding the underlying reasons for why sex is so important, why it's so great, and why it's worth prioritizing, and why it's worth talking about. And it's good and right and true and healthy to prioritize sex and to prioritize talking about sex.

And then we're going to talk through five things that all couples need to talk about in order to be good at it, to be good at sex. I think we all want to be good at sex. Right? In your marriage, obviously, that's just you and your spouse. You can have a desire to be good at it. And that's okay. And this will be a game-changer if you as a couple can really embrace this.

Now, here's where I want to contrast it. We're not talking about this from a sexual liberty, from a worldly self-actualization standpoint. We're not trying to somehow squeeze in the sexual liberation ethic of the 1960s. We're going to talk through that a little bit. That's not what we're trying to do. We're not trying to import worldly values and say, "Listen, you need to be free to talk about this because it's all about expression, it's all about individualism, it's all about self-actualization." We're not saying that. Sex is bigger than us, it's more beautiful than we could imagine, and it's more pure than we could ever hope for if we submit ourselves into God's plan.

**Selena:** And it's foundational. It's foundationalized in the Bible. God is the one who created it. And so stepping from there and contrasting, that just the path just... go. It divides. Like you're at a tee. You either believe that God created it for certain purposes and reasons and within certain boundaries, or you don't. And you live out whatever that path is. If you know us, you know what path we take. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Yeah. But let's be really clear about it. I do want to draw that fork in that road. So a little bit of a back story here. You might know this. If you already know this, this is going to be a review. And the point is I'm trying to illustrate how our culture's tendency is not to err toward health and wholeness in this area. Our culture tends to go the opposite way. It doesn't mean there's not any redeeming kind of aspects of these revolutionary times that we're the result of, but I think there was a...

Again, these are the culmination of years and years and years of philosophical thought, namely post-modernism, deconstructionism, and kind of the way they work themselves into the popular culture, into the popular scene around sexuality, namely, back in the 60s, right? Remember the 60s is the decade of love. That was the whole thing.

**Selena:** Or that was the result of the 50s too.

**Ryan:** Okay, yeah. It was kind of the pendulum swing in the opposite way. The previous 50 years really—we're talking about Western culture, namely in the US—you had, in a lot of ways, a negative view of sex. Even though it was more traditional, [00:15:00] it was also really negative because there was this undo kind of prudishness. It was basically people saw sex, because it was physical,

because it had to do with the flesh, it was, therefore, anti-spiritual, anti-holiness, and bad. And that comes from a platonic, kind of Hellenistic philosophical view of it. We've talked about that in the past.

That's where you get people that are just like, "Sex is just dirty. It's just dirty in itself. It's bad thing. We engage in sex because we have to, and if we enjoy it, we do so quietly. We don't..."

**Selena:** Or just for reproduction.

**Ryan:** Yeah, that's what I mean. We have to because it's...

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** We shouldn't just do it just to have a good time.

**Selena:** That was the belief.

**Ryan:** That was the belief. So the 60s, we kind of saw the pendulum swing the other side. They call it the decade of love. Of course, they're using a biblical idea and they're importing all this other stuff. And what they meant was basically free love, and love that was love. I'm using quotation marks, quotation fingers. But love that was detached from...

**Selena:** Covenant.

**Ryan:** Well, physical love that was detached from any sort of inhibition. That was known as a sexual liberation movement or sexual revolution. Again, it started in the 60s, and it goes back to, I'd say, post-modernism. So if you're not aware of what post-modernism is, basically, it's the school of thought that says that everything is relative, everything is subjective. All absolute standards, all objective reality is brought into question. And it's only valid insofar as it's experienced. So everything has been kind of...

**Selena:** So what would be the drawback of that then?

**Ryan:** Well, there's no absolute truth and there's no standard by which to measure these things. That gives way to deconstruction, which is basically the idea that words as they are put forth only have meaning as they are assigned by the perceiver.

**Selena:** So words are being redefined?



**Ryan:** Yes, but not so overtly is that. Jacques Derrida, he was a French philosopher who kind of led the deconstruction movement. He died early this century. His whole thing and one of the things he said is there's no objective meaning to the text. Basically, what he's saying, and this is you take to the nth degree is like you and I could write a book on marriage, we could say, "Marriage is great." And he would say, "Okay, well, regardless of what you mean as authors, I'm going to read the words 'marriage is great' and I'm going to interpret those however I decide to interpret those regardless of what your intent was." So we see this...

**Selena:** So dangerous, huh?

**Ryan:** I actually wrote a little piece on this. Here's what it says: "While I won't take the time to [inaudible] culture spread away from a biblical ethic of sex, I will say that it's accelerated in the past 50 years. And the most recent heat around gender identity pronoun, sexual preference, etc. are the proverbial wheels flying off the axles from decades of increasing speed wobbles in this area." I feel like the wave is crusting. And what's happening is now that all these thoughts are actually finally seen their...

**Selena:** They're being brought to light and they are being worked out.

**Ryan:** Well, and they're actually being realized in real life. And now you're getting people who are not Christian, who don't have a Christian worldview who are now pushing back at the insanity. And they're saying...

**Selena:** Of deconstruct.

**Ryan:** Of deconstruction, of woke movement, all that kind of stuff. And kancil culture. Namely, there's a lot of heat around the... I even hesitate to say this because I don't want to get filtered out. By the way, go to patreon.com and support us, because who knows how long this podcast will be allowed. But transgenderism, and the pushback against that in terms of the studies that are showing how it's... it's pretty much there's nothing redemptive about it, especially allowing our young children to go through the transitions and stuff. Just the science. They're not even Christian, and they're coming out and saying, like, "This is damaging to society."

So society has completely detached itself from any sort of sexual ethic that is rooted in a greater reality. This is the bedrock of post-modernism is it's all about the individual. It's all about individual experience, expression, perception, and individual self-actualization. So I need to actualize myself however I can at any cost. And self-actualization looks like anything that I feel

to be right, good, and true, regardless of whether it's actually right, good, and true.

**Selena:** Wow.

**Ryan:** So here we are.

**Selena:** Contrast that with a biblical worldview. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Okay. The biblical [00:20:00] worldview as you can imagine is very different. It's sex is not just physical. And that's one of the big pieces of the postmodern sexual revolution is it's detached from the fleshly sexual experience in that I am a body. So my soul is in a sense detached from the sexual things that I do. Like me having sex with any person, if I want to do it, the only consequences are going to be physical. So we protect from things like STDs, we protect from things like sexual violence, which of course we want to protect from all these things. But they don't take into account there's an emotional toll here, there is a spiritual toll, there's a relational toll.

That a woman who gets married now, God is redemptive, okay, God is good. He can make beauty from the ashes and He works miracles in lives of individuals every day, especially around this area as couples get married and they find reconciliation in this area. But the secular view is I should be able to have sex with as many partners as they want as long as I want it. If want it, I should have it and I should have with other people who want it. And how dare you tell me otherwise? The worldview says that that will bear no negative consequence further down the road in your life.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** The Christian world says that sex is something bigger. It's not just physical. It is the sign of something bigger. Namely, it's the sign of the covenant of marriage. So the covenantal theme in Scripture, I won't get into it, but every covenant, every promise that God makes those people has a sign associated with it. But the covenant between man and woman in marriage also has a sign. And it's sex.

We see that in the garden. In Genesis 2:24, the two will become one flesh. And then Jesus echoes that later on in the New Testament. That the man will leave his family and cling to his wife, hold fast to his wife, cleave to his wife. And they were naked and unashamed. That's the consummation. It's a consummation of a deeper covenant. In other words, sex in a biblical standpoint is not just physical. It is physical. And that's okay. It's not bad. But it's also relational. It has to do with the relationship I have with this one

woman. It's relational. I can't detach it. As soon as I detach it from relationship, I objectify my wife or I objectify others. It's emotional. There's an emotional aspect to it.

**Selena:** Yeah, you can deny that as much as you want, but it's an absolute.

**Ryan:** It makes you feel closer to each other. Look at Song of Solomon, the whole push and pull there between the lover and the beloved, the husband and the wife, the chasing and the following, and the rapturesness that it is. There's no doubt that God designed sex and prescribed it to be an emotional event. It's an emotional thing.

And then finally, it's spiritual. And that's the whole becoming one flesh piece. It's spiritual because it is the ceiling, it's is the sign of the reminder of the covenant that we share with one another. When we are together intimately, what is the phrase that exchange most often? I'm getting a little more personal now. But the words that are exchanged most often are "I love you" in those moments. It's reminder I choose you, I still choose you, I chose you. This is a reminder of that. It's a sign of I am not going anywhere.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** And that's a covenantal bond. That can be kind of picked apart. The thing I want to do the most here though is, again, we're going to talk about having these conversations. But the important underlying thing when we talk about sex is understanding its context. It is not just a physical thing. When we view it as a physical, spiritual, emotional, relational thing, now it's not just "All right, here's a laundry list of things that I want to do in sex someday. A, B, C, D, and E, and a little X, Y, and Z. Once we do those things, I'm going to be a happy husband and you better figure it out." That's just looking at the physical.

When I see it as a relational thing, it's now not just about Ryan. It's not just about Selena. It's about how can we enjoy each other more fully? And that could look like, "Selena, tell me what you like." And that might be awkward at times, but "what do you prefer?" And you might say, "I don't honestly know, but I'll let you know when the time comes." *[both chuckles]* So we've talked about it now, and so in the moment, I can say, "Are you okay? What can I do for you? Are you good? Do you need anything right now?" And you've been really good about saying like, "Yeah, you know what?" or "No, I'm good." It just depends on the moment. Right?

**Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** So I want to walk through a little bit and just kind of flesh this out even more and then we're getting to the six things that we can talk about. But I want to trace it. This is why I think sex is so much deeper and so much greater when we realize that sex is... it is good because it has a design. Excuse me. [00:25:00] So sex is good because it has a design. And that design is what makes it good.
- Selena:** I would argue that the designer *[laughs]* is what makes it good.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And the design is not just like...
- Selena:** It's not arbitrary, of course.
- Ryan:** It's not something that happen, you know, even in a human history.
- Selena:** Right. Right.
- Ryan:** God designed it with the first couple, Adam and Eve, and then He gave them a command at the same time, a parallel command: Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. So they're designed with the purpose. And that's why I want to get to God's design for sex is largely encapsulated in the traditional Western view, which is this. Okay, I don't want to say Western view because it's not actually a Western view. It's a Near Eastern view, because it came from the garden. And it's not something that Western culture came up with. But when I say traditional, this is what usually people picture. And that's usually the traditional Western view. We're not saying the traditional Hebrew view.
- Selena:** Gotcha.
- Ryan:** Here it is just in progression. Sex belongs in marriage alone, and marriage is between one man one woman for life. And you see the progression. Therefore, sex is a sign of this marriage covenant, one based on spiritual relational union, commitment, and biblical love. In other words, sex is a covenant expression that takes on emotional, spiritual, physical, relational weight that is only available within the design context.
- So let's just tease that out a little bit. We've talked about this a lot. But covenant gives your love a place to grow. And it's the arena in which the battle of love...
- Selena:** Right. But you can fail. You can fight. You can work it out together. And there's this safety of your covenant.
- Ryan:** Yes. Again, it's that reinforcement that says, "I'm not going anywhere. This covenant is here. Therefore, let's work on this aspect of our lives and see how

that's a much safer place." You had mentioned... You were talking about how we used to feel like, Oh, sex has to be passionate all the time. Otherwise, it's not like a real sexual experience. If we plan it, we take the spontaneity out of it."

But honestly, it feels to me like... Somebody else used this analogy. It's like if you're out in the wilderness and you have to survive. And sure, you could probably start a fire with a little bit of tinder, with a little bit of smaller sticks, a flint. You could start a fire that way. But my advice is you could start a fire that way and you could do that every way that time. That gets really tiring and unpredictable. And what if it rains? So entrepreneur lighter. Why don't you bring some fuel? Better yet, why don't you build a house? Why don't you get help from the wilderness and put your fire in the hearth and have a place where it burns and it burns hot. And just because you now have a fireplace doesn't mean the fire is any less warm. It just means now you actually can start a fire whenever you want.

**Selena:** It's good.

**Ryan:** And it's super warm. And it can heat your whole home. And here we go. That's where it trickles down. Because from a Christian ethic, sex results in children. Secularly speaking, we've removed children from the sex equation. And you can make all kinds of arguments around where that started, why that school of thought gained momentum mainly around first second-wave feminism, but now into the third wave, which is basically very toxic in a lot of ways. But the point is, is that they've removed the child from the sexual experience. And that happened primarily through birth control and now it happens tragically through the normalization of abortion in our society.

I only will have a child when I am good and ready to have a child. And I should be able to have sex with whoever I want, whenever I want with zero consequence. We're not getting into the nuances of that conversation. We're not trying to be uncompassionate around that topic. But I just want to be clear there is a separation, secularity speaking, between sex and childbearing.

**Selena:** There's a part of that. I think it's just the part of the deconstruction of the home, of marriage, of... So yeah, let's just take part of a piece and...

**Ryan:** And that's counter biblical.

**Selena:** Thinking that we're building a better...*[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** Freer society.

**Selena:** Freer society.

**Ryan:** The irony is, is it's not better. It's not free. The blame shifts. The responsibility shifts. In our culture we see the shift going more and more toward the government. The governments make these decisions. It needs to protect. The government needs to step in and intervene. That's outside of the government's scope biblically speaking.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I'll go through this quickly. Sex results in children who are considered an immense blessing and perhaps one of the paramount capital B Blessings in the human experience. Children are a blessing and therefore... [00:30:00] Again, walking down this progression, sex belongs in marriage. Marriage looks like a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Sex results in children because sex is a sign of the covenant. Father, mother, and child comprise the quote-unquote, "household."

The healthy household involves one mother, one father, and children. Unhealthy households are many representations of the capital F Family of God or the Church. So we have things like family worship, there's headship, there's helpship, there is a complementarian view of father, mother, husband, wife. Children see that exemplified, they see a father loving like Christ loved the church from the bottom up, not lording over them, but loving gently from below.

**Selena:** Through service, yeah.

**Ryan:** Through service, and through self-sacrifice, through selfless love. And then healthy churches. Okay. Households comprise healthy church, which is the macro representation of marriage and family. Remember Christ and his capital B Bride, the church.

Here's another parallel being made. Healthy churches contribute to healthy societies and serve the needy. Healthy churches hearken the one message that leads to human flourishing. In other words, utopia. And that one message is the gospel. And the only route to this quote-unquote, "utopia" is through Jesus Christ. I'm the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me. I could contrast that to the secular view but essentially, I don't think I need to at this point.

**Selena:** I think we've done that a little bit. Yeah.

**Ryan:** But this utopia that everyone's going for is the only route to utopia is through policy and through government through activism because they're trying to detach all these bonds.

**Selena:** Non-Christians, yes.

**Ryan:** That was a big kind of soapbox moment there. But the point that I'm trying to make in all that is that when we talk about sex as a married couple, it has all that context. So when we strive for a healthy sex life, when we strive to have healthy communication around our sex life, that's what we're fighting for.

**Selena:** Right. That's what's at stake. These are the reasons why. We always think of those things when we're trying to have those conversations. And sometimes the easiest way to have those conversations is to go through a worksheet or have somebody else lead you through some questions are some ways of approaching, especially if you haven't talked about it or you feel very kind of sheepish or unsure about how to talk about sex. I think that's okay. And I think you just need to take that first step.

**Ryan:** Yeah. If I had to do quick summary, though, I just want to say that the two big contrasting points that have to do with... I didn't coin this term. I'm going to use this term. Sexual safety. So how do we know that, sexually speaking, we're on safe ground? Biblically speaking, Christians are sexually safe when our sex is conformed to God's biblical design. And there's a lot of leeway there.

**Selena:** What do you mean leeway?

**Ryan:** What I mean is that between husband and wife, there's a lot of room for having fun together, for experiencing each other. There's not a lot of "don't do that" is what I'm trying to say. There are a few I think non-negotiables in the Christian sexual experience biblically speaking, but by and large, it's a huge playground with lots of fun places to go play. That's what I'm trying to say.

**Selena:** Good. I just wanted to clarify that.

**Ryan:** God designed it that way. And there are boundaries. Christian covenantal marriage, one man, one woman for life. But outside of that... I mean, outside of that... Inside of that boundary... *[laughs]* Sorry, poor word choice there. So that's sexual safety from a Christian standpoint.

Now, from a secular standpoint, sexual safety, you to feel sexually safe, quote-unquote, when your expression of individualism is hindered by prejudice, judgment, or any sort of moral constraint. In other words, don't you dare tell me what's right, what's wrong? What's right and wrong is in my heart. And

that's where I'm sexually safe. So anything you say against that... That's why people say, "Don't judge me." That's why they say, "How dare you judge me? You don't know my experience." And we're sitting here saying like, okay, you're right. We don't know your experience, but we do know that the path toward flourishing and every avenue of life is through the Bible's way.

**Selena:** Instruction, yeah.

**Ryan:** God's instruction. And it happens to look like this when we're talking about sex. That's the contrast around sexual safety. That's all very heady. We've been talking for a little while now. About 30 minutes. Let's get into very tangible ways to talk about sex. Does that sound like a good point?

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I've been talking because I wrote that first part. I'll let you talk the rest of the time.

**Selena:** Oh, great. *[Ryan laughs]*

**Ryan:** Come on. You got this.

**Selena:** Here we go.

**Ryan:** We started singing the song and everything. [00:35:00] I was that excited about it.

**Selena:** I was that excited about it. You said five. We talked about six. I don't know. Where are you going? Five or six?

**Ryan:** Let's go with six because that's... Full disclosure here. One of the reasons that we thought this would be apropro... appropriate *[both laughs]* to talk about is because I was on my newsfeed which I happen to just get my news from Google. I read headlines. It's a terrible way to get your news, but it's become sort of an addiction of mine. *[both chuckles]* I just want to read the headlines, I feel like I know what's going on.

Anyway, for whatever reason, this article from fatherly.com... I don't know anything about this website. I'm pretty sure they talk about dad stuff and maybe some other things from a non-Christian worldview. Now, that it's anti-Christian, but I just don't think that's their foundation. And this article popped up: "6 Things All Couples Who Are Good at Sex Talk About." All right?

**Selena:** Hmm.



- Ryan:** So I thought, what would be really fun to do is talk through each one of these quote-unquote "things" that couples who are good at sex talk about and think critically biblically about them kind of in real-time. Is that all right?
- Selena:** Yeah
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** The first one is they talk about their sex life regularly — at the right time.
- Ryan:** Oh.
- Selena:** I was like, "Whoa, I mean, could have avoided some mistakes there." *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** What do you mean "at the right time"? What are they talking about?
- Selena:** They're saying that it's good to have good communication about sex. Like you should talk about sex regularly. But if it's not at the right time, then it can be misinterpreted as possibly like rejection or misunderstanding. It can be more destructive rather than helpful if we're not in a moment to be an attentive listener and able to ask questions. If we're just in the middle of making dinner and that five o'clock weird hour and you're like, "Hey, let's talk about sex." You're like. "What? huh?" *[chuckles]* So timing is everything. It's not just what you say, but it's when you say it.
- Ryan:** A more common occurrence at least for us is to... it's like 10 o'clock at night, kids are finally in bed, it's been...
- Selena:** 10 o'clock at night. Our kids go to bed at like 7:30. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** They've been in bed, and we've talked and it's time to actually make good on this part of our marriage.
- Selena:** We never try to wait that late because of this reason. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Yeah, because we're tired and then Selena will be like, "All right, well, okay, I'm tired." I'm like, "You're too tired for me? You don't love me?" And you're like, "You know, you're tired." I'm like, "I'm not tired."
- Selena:** "You're tired." Yes, I am.

**Ryan:** And it ends up being unproductive conversation. It only took us about 17 years to figure this out.

**Selena:** Trying to give you guys a heads up here.

**Ryan:** I like the way they put it in the article is make sure that your spouse has the emotional capacity to talk intimately. And so what gets me about this point is they talk about their sex life regularly. What do you mean regularly? Is it like a weekly occurrence? Monthly occurrence?

**Selena:** You can work that out with your spouse.

**Ryan:** I think it's as often as you need to.

**Selena:** Yeah, because some people, they don't need that much, I don't know, touchpoints. They don't need to talk about it all the time. I think there's a healthy rhythm of communication that they're probably having. It's personality-dependent, too, I think.

**Ryan:** Well, here's the really cool thing about this talking about sex with your spouse, especially within covenantal framework, is that it's a growing body of knowledge. One thing we talked about last week, we've talked about that thing. Now we have a foundational understanding. So say you have a lot of dysfunction in this area. You could say, "Let's commit to talking about our sex life once a week for the next five or six weeks." And then you can say, "Wow, we're actually improving. Let's make sure we revisit this once a month."

You know what? You can do that, couples. You don't have to be awkward about it. You can put it on your calendar, and just put a big s on whatever the day is that you're going to talk about it and make sure you have the bandwidth to do so. Maybe over dinner or after the kids are asleep. Like that's what you're going to reserve your emotional capacity for.

**Selena:** As Christians, again, remembering the foundation that we just talked about for 30 minutes of we don't have to be sheepish about this. We can be confident about it and we can walk in assurance knowing that God designed this, God purposed sex for our good, for His glory, and for fruitfulness. So approach it with some godly confidence, I would say.

**Ryan:** I mean, yeah. And just as another kind of to bolster the point even further. Because I feel like this is the one area where couples, for whatever reason, they don't think they have to plan or strategize around. It's like you'll strategize around your budget, you'll strategize around your schedule, you'll strategize around your 401k...

- Selena:** I think it's such an emotional experience that we think emotions shouldn't be scheduled probably in some ways.
- Ryan:** When's the last time you had a blowup fight about your 401k? Or your, whatever... your budget? Right?
- Selena:** True.
- Ryan:** You might have fights over your budget. But the point is, is that this one feels like it needs a lot of extra tendril here.
- Selena:** Yeah, there's so much at stake really. So number two. They put sex on the calendar — and talk about the upcoming date.
- Ryan:** We've talked about this a lot—scheduling it. We have weekly kind of... this is when the window within which we...
- Selena:** Yeah, they're arguing that it's healthy to write down the dates and plan the times to have sex. Because they say you can kind of flirt and tease each other leading up to the actual date, and time, and so on. I was like, "Huh, I never even thought about that." Like I know we kind of flirt and we put out the vibe or whatever, but I didn't... you know, you kind of think, "Okay, we're married. This is within our covenant. We can engage in this a little bit more."
- Ryan:** Amen. Just exudes. Just get yourselves a big tub of cheese balls. *[Selena laughs]* Husbands, I'm telling you wives can't resist it.
- Selena:** Stop. Let's close it right there.
- Ryan:** I'm always putting out fun. I don't think I can...
- Selena:** Sure you can't. You just can't.
- Ryan:** And you can't help it. You feel the vibe all the time.
- Selena:** I also think it's cool because they say scheduling sex increases communication about the upcoming sex, which naturally increases communication about sex overall.
- Ryan:** Okay. However, I will say that you, you can tend to feel like the expectations are piling up. And then when it comes time you're just like...
- Selena:** For sure.

**Ryan:** "What are you going to do?"

**Selena:** And maybe that's a season thing, right? There's a lot of...

**Ryan:** And that's building trust thing.

**Selena:** Yeah. And there's a lot of expectation. But we have also cultivated our communication around sex so that I can say, "Well, I know you're wanting this and I'm wanting this, but this is what things are looking like right now. Do you see this? Can we work together? Can we talk about this?"

**Ryan:** And this is why it's so key to remember the foundation. You guys, I'm talking to husbands. It's not just about you. It's about how can you approach and love your wife tenderly and want to get at her heart in this physical exchange? It's not just "I'm looking forward to this release."

**Selena:** Right. Can I say as a wife, though, I feel like it's one of the most loving things that you've done to me when you're, for lack of a better term, letting me off the hook because you just understand me. You are trying to get my heart. You're trying to love me and then I'm all the more just taken back by "you love me that much, I want to love you back and give myself to you." So that desire kind of builds and grows from there.

**Ryan:** Again, this is number two. They put sex on the calendar and talk about the upcoming dates. I just want to caution against lewdness. Because a couple who could be well-meaning, we mustn't cheapen sex. You mustn't cheapen each other, cheapen it for what it is. Remember it is the sign of the covenant. It is a sacrament in that way. It's a consummation of and a reminder of your covenant. Don't use cheap worldly language to describe that thing.

Love your wife as the woman of God that she is. She is not an object for your sexual fantasy. Don't get me wrong. You need to delight in your wife but she's not just a means to an end is what I'm trying to say. So your language and leading up to it, husbands, wives, reflect that. I never want to say anything to you no matter how sexually charged or well-meaning it is, I don't want to say anything to you that makes you feel...

**Selena:** Persuaded or something.

**Ryan:** Cheapened.

**Selena:** Cheapened.

**Ryan:** Yeah. I don't want to offend your sensibilities. It's unbecoming. I don't know.

**Selena:** I think that's good to be cautious because there's many ways that you can definitely cheapen your experience or make somebody feel a little bit more objectified than you're intending.

**Ryan:** And there's a healthy sense of reverence that I think we can cultivate around sex. Like revere it for what it is. It's a gift, it's a blessing, and it's a serious but really fun thing. But it's not a flippant thing. Enough said on that. So, number three.

**Selena:** Number three. They talked about their likes and dislikes openly. They say that a sexual wish list is great. Sex is kind of adult play, imaginative and free-flowing. I'm just trying to word this correctly I think...

**Ryan:** I'll jump in then.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I feel like this is touching on a truth. But we need to be really careful in how we approach it.

**Selena:** Yes. Biblical worldview, folks. [00:45:00]

**Ryan:** Again, in the Christian worldview, in our view of sex, it is enjoyable to the individual but it's not just about the individual.

**Selena:** Individual enjoyment. Yeah.

**Ryan:** The enjoyment. It's about: how can I serve my spouse? How can I give to you, not how can I take? How can I love you? You can say, "Hey, this is a little awkward and we've done it once in the 10 years that we've been married. But I thought it was really fun and I would enjoy to try that thing again." Whatever it is. I'll just say it right now, because I feel it probably needs to be said. But biblically speaking, I think there's a lot of leeway around how husband and wife engage in sex as long as doesn't call the cause of pain or bodily harm or dysfunction in any way.

And so for those reasons, and I can make a biblical case for this, but for those reasons, I do believe the one thing that is very much off-limits for a Christian couple is anal intercourse because it causes pain and it causes injury. It is degrading and a lot of ways. That's just from a physical standpoint. From a traditional standpoint, from a biblical history standpoint, it's always been

associated with sin. It's always been associated with dominance in a really unhealthy way. Okay. I was going to say that. That's the elephant in the room.

Aside from that, it's going to come down to your consciences and what you have agreed to and experienced together that's going to be uplifting in service of one another. I don't want to get any more specific than that because I feel like that's for husband and wife to figure out.

So with that said, talk about your likes, dislikes. Talk about them openly. I think what's really powerful here is honestly talking about your dislikes.

**Selena:** And I mean being sensitive to your partner.

**Ryan:** "I don't like your face. *[both laughs]* You smell like a foot." *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** That one's never come out... *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** You got to be sensitive.

**Selena:** ...in the moment. That's funny.

**Ryan:** Be sensitive. The reason I say "dislikes" is because I feel like you do have to have thick skin. You'd have to be really careful when talking around these topics. But that's where you build trust. And the cool thing is, like we said earlier, it is a compounding body of knowledge. You do gain more information.

**Selena:** Yes.

**Ryan:** And honestly, what might be a like or dislike this year might not be on that same list next year.

**Selena:** Yeah. Which if we keep going down the list, they do talk a little bit more about that. But number four, they talk about their triggers — and don't shame their partner.

**Ryan:** Interesting.

**Selena:** It says, "Anyone can have tender spots in conversation that bring up past vulnerabilities or issues. But couples who communicate successfully aren't blindsided by those. Instead, they just recognize when those topics come up, own the responses and get past them without placing blame." So avoiding language like "you always" or "you never."

**Ryan:** I think this falls under the camp of being fully known.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I generally kind of don't... I'm triggered by the trigger word. *[both laughs]* Because I feel like it just means like, "I don't like that thing. So don't talk about that thing." I feel like we need to be a little bit more grown up about these things. And we need to have some topics that we can talk about. Now, I think what they're saying is you don't want to disregard your spouse's history, their past, places that are painful for them emotionally speaking. So talking about those things out, getting those out in the open can be really helpful.

**Selena:** Yeah. They're saying placing blame should absolutely be avoided at all costs because it unfairly turns our problems into our partners when you're talking about sex.

**Ryan:** Uhhh.

**Selena:** Yeah, I know. I know.

**Ryan:** The way they're saying it, obviously, it's sans biblical input. I think, biblically speaking, blaming feels like a very selfish activity. Biblically speaking sex is selfless. Okay, I'll use an example. If we are engaged in and having sex and I feel like there's a frustration there, I have a choice to make. I can say, "My wife is not doing the thing," or "she's not behaving or giving me what I deserve, therefore, she is the object of blame." And that honestly, it could be the case because we're married to human people, so they're not perfect.

Or as a husband, okay, I can choose another route. I can say, "My wife, she's not flourishing in this moment. She's not okay in this moment. It's not about me. How can I serve her in this moment, even though, even though I might be justified and frustrated and hurt and all that could be valid. But I'm just saying, [00:50:00] men, this is an opportunity for you to rise up and to as Matt Chandler says, "The boy falls for the girl goes free." Like to take one for the team and say, "How can I serve my wife in this moment?" All that being said, there are very real aspects of the emotional, human experience that are worth talking about to make sure that you are sensitive to those.

**Selena:** Yeah. I don't know if I like number four, to be honest. I just think when you talk about sex, you need to be aware of each other's and know each other's paths and be just loving in how you communicate and not blaming, like you said. But also there's not shame around this. When I'm saying this, I'm not blaming you. "This is where this is coming from," or "when we do this or whatever..." And I think that we have to own or if our spouse comes to us saying, "When you said this, it made me feel like this," you can own that, or

you can fight it, right? The choice is that. But they're saying, take some accountability, take some ownership in what you're saying. Again, let's bring the Bible back to it. Where's our heart orientation in the whole conversation?

**Ryan:** Genesis 2:25. "And the man and his wife were both naked and we're not ashamed." That's in the garden. There was no sin, there was no perversion, there was no shame. Beautiful thing of that is sin didn't enter the picture like three verses later. Like the chapter later.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** However, we are in the time of grace and the Holy Spirit and being redeemed by the blood of Christ and saved by the blood of Christ. So shame is not our lot. And so let us not keep shame on one another, particularly around this area. Let us be open and honest communicators, but let us do so with Holy Spirit infused verbiage, with Holy Spirit infused motivation, with love. I think that's a powerful thing. Number five.

**Selena:** Number five. You kind of touched on this a little bit previously. They talked about a sexual menu. It says, "Just like food, you or your partner can be in the mood for different things at different times." Like when you said maybe something that you tried wasn't great when you tried it, but maybe a couple of years later, you try it, you're like, "I like this." Or just even different sexual experiences. We talk what is ours... is called...

**Ryan:** *[laughing]* I have no idea what you're talking about.

**Selena:** The blog post that.

**Ryan:** Oh, the spectrum sex?

**Selena:** The spectrum of sex.

**Ryan:** I thought you're talking about something in our sexual experience.

**Selena:** Sorry.

**Ryan:** The only word that came to mind was... never mind I'm not going to say it.  
*[both laughs]*

**Selena:** I was like, "Oh, my goodness."

**Ryan:** I don't have to edit that.



- Selena:** Yeah. But they say under this menu part...
- Ryan:** Foliage. *[both laughs]* That's not the original word, but that was the word.
- Selena:** It was not. Okay. So they say, "have three columns. First column contains what you like and will do. The second, what you might try. And third, what you absolutely won't do." And I think I'll find a biblical view to this. That might be a good place to start as far as, "Okay, these are kind of my expectations," or "these are things I like, these are things I would be willing to try." And the absolutes are definitely like... I think they're pretty clear like we mentioned before.
- Ryan:** I just can't help it. Again, we need to root ourselves in the biblical ethic of sex. It is good and right and...
- Selena:** Glorifying to God.
- Ryan:** Glorifying to God to explore all of these things that you love, things you'd be willing to try, things you don't want to try. And it's all with this. You have to remember. It's the context of loving and serving one another in this amazing gift that it is. And it's not just a laundry list of things. That's an opportunity. That's an opportunity to be generous to one another.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And not just say, "Okay, I'd be willing to try this," or like, "Can you imagine?" Okay, we had this conversation... or a husband and wife had this conversation, *[Selena laughs]* and they know that they have these... we talked about the triggers in the previous one. They know that there's maybe this past that is still bearing its weight, and it's still not been completely figured out yet. And the husband says, "I will never try that because I know how that how you might feel." I'd be willing to try x, I'd be willing to try y, but z, although I know that it's probably fine in most contexts...
- Selena:** Because I know you.
- Ryan:** ...because I know you, that's off-limits. I never want to hurt you. I never want to do anything that's going to make you feel that way.
- Selena:** Compromised.
- Ryan:** That's an opportunity for generosity. So think through that lens instead of just being self-focused.

- Selena:** That's fully what this column is.
- Ryan:** This is written mostly for like, how do you get what you want?
- Selena:** Yeah. We wanted to just run through it for a biblical perspective, because we do this all the time with information. We're constantly filtering. The last one is they talk about and validate each other's sexual strengths. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Never mind. I'm having a hard time. I'm having to filter a lot of things out right now. In other words...
- Selena:** So, validation they say is essential to any healthy relationship, including your sexual one.
- Ryan:** Here's another way to say it. Complement each other. In other words, "Here's what I love this about you. When we are engaged, this is what surprise me. And that's in a really good way."
- Selena:** Which I think, yes, there's a...
- Ryan:** Sexual strength just sounds like a really weird thing to say. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** There's tendency to just dwell on the negative, hear the negative. We all know our shortcomings, right? We all feel unsure. We all know that we are not good at certain things, or are still failing all the time. But when we hear some sort of encouragement or... I think it's really special because it's just between you and your spouse. That makes it all the more weighty, if you will. So learn what phrases kind of speak to your partner...not partner, sorry. Your spouse. They use partner a lot for obvious reasons. We do not. We talk about spouses because sex is marital covenant.
- Ryan:** That's really good. So let's just do a recap. I might want to add a seventh one here that is coming to mind.
- Selena:** It's our podcast.
- Ryan:** It's our podcast. *[Selena chuckles]*
- Selena:** We can add it. Plus seven is God's number, right? *[both chuckles]*
- Ryan:** It's perfection. Six is the number of the beast. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness.

- Ryan:** I'm only kidding mostly. *[both chuckles]* So number seven. I'm adding this one. I think maybe figure out a way to talk productively during sex. So you can communicate. You don't have to just... like it's not all of a sudden that you lose thoughts and you lose words to say as soon as you're actually in... Obviously, you have to take this with a grain of salt. Okay, you don't want to... just know that it's okay to communicate during the act of sex.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** So you can say...
- Selena:** It's good. It's okay. It's good.
- Ryan:** I feel like asking questions is probably the most natural way to communicate. Like, "How are you?" *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Disengage lovingly as if you're a human being within this act, and not just screaming at your partner or like...
- Ryan:** Right. On the far end of the spectrum, we have a guy who's way too aggressive and completely disregarding how his actions are affecting his wife. And she is just kind of caught up in it, and she feels like she can't say or do anything because he's going to react adversely. And then everything's all said and done. And the guy's thinking, "Wow, that was awesome." And she's just like, "Okay."
- Selena:** Right, right.
- Ryan:** Learn to communicate. And men, what I mean by asking questions is don't just assume that everything's okay. Being that you're probably in the more powerful side of the equation, be the more sensitive one.
- Selena:** It's good. I think the more you work on talking about sex outside of the bedroom, the better you are at it in the bedroom, to be honest. Like the more we talk about it, the more we have a certain vocabulary around it, the easier it is, the less words you have to use when you're in the middle of it.
- Ryan:** And I'll just add this at the end here. We don't get terribly specific in our conversations. We talk mostly about timing, frequency, and to be honest, logistics. We don't get into the nitty-gritty, like, here's what I'm hoping we're going to try. We don't get into that because I think we trust that in the moment we can read each other and we can take risks in a way. And then in the moment, we might talk about specifics.
- Selena:** Yeah, well, because there's trust.

**Ryan:** It doesn't feel so out of place.

**Selena:** Time has built trust and it's founded in the Bible and the gospel. I think we're running out of time here.

**Ryan:** Okay. I'll say a prayer and we'll call it an episode. Lord, I thank you for the gift that it is to enjoy one another in marriage. God, thank you that you made sex what it is. I pray that you would conform our view of sex, our conversations around sex to your view of sex, and to how you spoke of sex in your word. I thank you that you weren't silent on it. You didn't leave it to us to figure out on our own, but you've given us your word. You've told us to be naked and unashamed and to pursue one another and to enjoy and drink deep of love and to even in some cases, like in Proverbs 5 to be intoxicated in our love for one another. So I thank you that you have spoken to this.

I pray that you would embolden couples to have these conversations in love [01:00:00] and with sensitivity and with mostly just being led by your Holy Spirit. I pray for couples that have experienced trauma or damage in this area that you would bring healing, that you would start those healing conversations between them and that you would bring new life, redemption, and reconciliation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, ladies, gentlemen, this episode is—

**Selena:** In the can.

**Ryan:** Thank you for joining us once again for the Fierce Marriage podcast. We will see you again in seven days. Until then—

**Ryan:** Stay fierce.

**[01:00:34]** <outro>

**Ryan:** Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit [FierceMarriage.com](http://FierceMarriage.com), or you can find us with our handle @Fiercemarriage on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **[00:21:39]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Genesis 2:24
  
- **[00:51:17]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Genesis 2:25

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